

REIGER BEGONIA

Reiger Begonias are ideal for the window-sill gardener as they will bloom for months on end if placed, ideally, in an East window. Several hours of moderate sunlight are best. During the summer months, plants in a South window should be protected from the intense noon-day sun. Reiger Begonias will flower best on about 12 hours of daylight daily. Excessive bright light may inhibit blooms. As the heat from the sun increases in the summer, reduce or filter the light somewhat to protect the foliage from burn. Foliage that turns from green to a coppery colour would indicate that some protection is needed.

Light

During the winter months, when there are shorter days and less sunshine, some supplemental lighting such as nearby florescent lights or an incandescent plant light, will help to keep plants looking vigorous.

Temperature

Reiger Begonias prefer low humidity and good air circulation. A room with a ceiling fan is ideal to promote healthy full growth. Never wet the leaves on a begonia, or, mist, unless you must for the purposes of insect control.

Water

When watering, use tepid or slightly warm water, and wet the soil thoroughly. Make sure all water drains away from the pot to prevent the roots from remaining soggy. The soil should feel a little dry to the touch before watering again. This will allow the soil to draw much needed oxygen to the roots.

Fertilizer

Fertilize sparingly when begonias are blooming. Remember, lots of fertilizer may give you lots of leaves...and no blooms!

Re-potting

If, and when, a plant outgrows its usual 5 to 6 inch pot (indicated by a general slow-up and pale green foliage) re-pot it into the next larger container, using only a light and very porous medium such as a packaged African Violet mix, or a mixture with high peat moss content, to provide the slight acidity that Reigers prefer. Reigers insist upon good drainage and adequate root aeration. Also, be sure to set the plants 1/4" above their previous soil levels to insure against crown rot. When the plant has flowered consistently for some seven or eight months and seems to be lagging, cut it back to about four inches or lowest lateral growth. If new basal shoots are showing, all the old growth may be removed and used to start or propagate new cuttings.